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HONDURAS

MIDEH PROJECT 2011-2016

QUARTERLY REPORT
FOR JANUARY THROUGH MARCH 2013

Submitted by:
American Institutes for Research

U.S. Agency for International Development
Cooperative Agreement No. AID-522-A-11-00004

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A.	Quarterly In-Country Training List	
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Acronyms

AIR	American Institutes for Research
AMHON	Honduran National Association of Municipalities
AMO	Association of Municipalities of Olancho
AOR	Agreement Officer's Representative
ASONOG	Association of NGOs
CETT	Centers for Excellence for Training Teachers
COMDE	Consejo Municipal de Desarrollo Educativo (Municipal Committee for Educational Development)
COP	Chief of Party
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DCNB	Diseño Curricular Nacional Básico (National Basic Curriculum)
DIGECE	Dirección General de Evaluación de la Calidad de la Educación
EFA	Education for All
EFA-FTI	Education for All-Fast Track Initiative
EQUIP	Educational Quality Improvement Program
FEREMA	Fundación para la Educación Ricardo Ernesto Maduro Andreu
GOH	Government of Honduras
GSC	Grupo de Sociedad Civil
IDP	American Institutes for Research's International Development Program
INICE	Instituto de Investigación y Capacitación Educativa
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MIDEH	Mejorando el Impacto al Desempeño Estudiantil de Honduras (Honduras Improving Student Achievement Project)
MOE	Ministry of Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PIER	Pro-Integración Educativa Roatan (Partners for Education Roatan)
SE	Secretaría de Educación
SBE	Standards-Based Education
STTA	Short-Term Technical Assistance
TCPP	Teacher-Citizen Participation Project - EducAcción
TH	Transformemos Honduras
UMCE	Unidad de Medición de la Calidad de la Educación
UNAH	Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Honduras
UPN/UPNFM	La Universidad Pedagógica Nacional Francisco Morazán
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

I. Project Summary Update

The Honduras Improving Student Performance Project (MIDEH Project) continued in early 2013 with activities related to the analysis and reporting on the 2012 end of grade tests and new activities to socialize evaluation results on a large scale. The Project achieved marked progress in the promotion of community participation in education improvements through new sub-grants and inclusion of civil society representatives in evaluation socialization, training, and strategy work sessions.

The major accomplishments of MIDEH Project this quarter were:

- Provided technical advice and logistical support to SE in the production and socialization of the results of the secure sample tests which were coordinated by the MIDEH Project, including presentation of the national report to the full cabinet of ministers, and a public event to present the evaluation results to an estimated 250 education stakeholders, donors, congressional leaders, and the media.
- Worked with the SE to ensure internet access by all teachers to the results of the first ever census-based student evaluation led by the SE on November 27, 2012 in 96% of public schools (covering grades 1-9 nationwide).
- Socialized the 2012 test results with a total of 360 key stakeholders nationwide including nearly every district director in the country, departmental directors, UTPs, civil society and local government representatives in a series of four regional workshops. The workshops included training on formative tests and strategic planning for education improvements at the local level based on school tests results.
- Awarded a sub-grant to Transformemos Honduras and partially disbursed against TH's first benchmark; signed a sub-grant agreement with AMO and approved the application of PIER for an award which was made in the first days of the current quarter. Pre-qualified two new applicants for sub-grants.
- Accrued estimated cumulative expenditures of \$2,886,565 through March 31, 2013 and documented cumulative cost share of \$ 206,158.

II. Education Sector Context

New School Year Opens. The 2013 school year opened with the Ministry of Education asserting its authority to define the academic calendar to guarantee at least 200 days of classroom instruction. The SE required that schools register students and complete administrative preparations in the last two weeks of January so to have teachers and children in the classrooms on February 1, a jump start for the school year compared to the traditional February 15 opening. The official school year calendar includes "Civic Saturday" sessions at schools and a fixed date of November 29 for end of grade testing to mark the official end of the school year. Nearly all public schools started classes on February 1, since there were penalties for schools that did not begin instruction on time.

Minister Escoto Steps Up Administrative Reforms. The Minister of Education has not flagged in his efforts to modernize much of the administrative apparatus and processes of the public education system, despite opposition from teacher union leaders. This year student registration was offered on-line, which will allow a more accurate count of the number of students in each center so to later verify assignment of resources for school feeding programs, other subsidy programs (e.g. “bono estudiantil” and “matricula gratis”), and the provision of text books, among others.

As part of the administrative modernization, the SE initiated a teacher registry to verify exactly how many teachers are being paid by the State. Teachers who did not register were removed from the payroll. The teacher registry will allow the government to put an end to abuses such as teachers with multiple jobs on the same schedule and teachers who are not working in their assigned positions. Parallel to the active teacher registry, a registry of unemployed teachers has been opened. Honduras will be able to analyze whether to continue the same level of investment in forming new teachers. Digital time clocks are now being used to control teacher attendance in several of the largest centers.

Strategies to Improve the Quality of Education. The Ministry of Education arranged a space on February 19 for presentation of the results of the 2012 end of grade tests to the entire cabinet of ministers followed by a public event with other donors, educators and the media. Based on its analysis of the test results, DIGECE published on the SE web page a series of recommendations for teachers on strategies to improve student academic performance. Each school director and classroom teacher whose students participated in the sample tests received tailored reports on student performance. Results of the census tests were available on the SE platform.

The SE has begun to promote periodic formative evaluations to guide teachers in remedial instruction for students throughout the school year, instead of waiting for the end of grade to provide makeup classes. Additionally, the Minister is strongly committed to initiate on-line training for teachers and to evaluate teacher knowledge and performance.

Conflict Continues with Teacher Union Leaders. This quarter the SE conflict with teacher union leadership escalated when the SE applied the rules that limit the period a teacher can work in a union position and still earn their teacher salary. Union leaders who did not return to their teaching assignments were fired. Some of the union leaders have taken their case against the SE to the courts. Departmental Directors who were suspended at the end of 2012 for various reasons including charges of corruption and illegal hiring have also taken their case to the Supreme Court, where it was determined that the administrative procedure followed for their dismissal was not correctly managed by the SE and should begin all over again. These are a few examples of factors that generate instability in the education sector.

III. Major Activities Implemented and Progress towards Results

Activities are reported here in line with the approved Annual Work Plan for 2013 as approved by USAID.

Program Result 1: Technical Capacity to Reach EFA Goals under SE Leadership Strengthened

Activity 1.1 DCNB, Aligned Educational Materials, and School Administered Tests; and

Activity 1.2 System-Wide External Summative Tests

The majority of the activities for the quarter under Result 1 were centered on the production and socialization of test results reports and the initiation of test development for 2013 with increased participation by DIGECE. Training described here also contributed to Result 2 objectives.

Psychometric Assistance. Rigorous psychometric properties and processing of the 2012 tests designed in cooperation with DIGECE with strong MIDEH Project and AIR home office assistance lend credibility to the results of the 2012 end of grade tests. MIDEH Project technical experts completed the analysis of the sample based test results and production of test reports at the national, school and classroom level. The dimensions of this task are impressive considering that the data base covered 93,000 students, more than 750 schools, and 7,585 classroom sections.

MIDEH Project supported the SE in its analysis of the census based test results and in the design of a basic template for reporting to each school similar to the reports generated for the secure sample schools. Related to those tasks, the Project proved advice and design assistance to the SE to make the web platform for census test reports more user friendly for teachers and schools.

The MIDEH Project supported its companion Project EducAcción in the digitalization of test booklets, cleaning the data in preparation for analysis, and finally in the design of the graphics on student academic performance for the reports for all EducAcción target municipalities which participated in the secure sample tests.

The German GIZ requested and received MIDEH Project help in analyzing 2012 results and preparing reports for the schools within their networks “Redes Educativas” in the western region of Honduras, as well as other schools under their project PROEFA.

2012 Evaluation Socialization. Project funds were used to print a sufficient quantity of the National Evaluation Report for public presentations and MIDEH Project socialization activities, as well as a modest amount of copies for the SE while the SE conducts a bidding process for the printing of more reports on a larger scale. The National Evaluation Report is available to the general public on-line and on CDs from the MIDEH Project. Large volume printing of the national Report is planned by the Ministry and was included in the budget provided by the Common Fund donors to the SE for census and sample tests. The MIDEH project printed single copies of school level and classroom reports for the schools in the sample and distributed the reports in the regional socialization and training events described below.

An innovation this year was the production of school level reports and the design of a poster showing a summary of results to be placed on the schools’ transparency walls for parents, teachers, students, and community members to openly see the 2012 results.

MIDEH Project staff socialized the 2012 test results with a total of 360 key stakeholders nationwide including nearly every district director in the country, departmental directors, UTP coordinators, SE departmental business managers, civil society and local government representatives in a series of four regional workshops carried out in an intensive 11 day period in March. The workshops included training on formative tests and strategic planning for education improvements at the local level based on school tests results. During the training/socialization events, MIDEH Project delivered printed reports for each school and class section from the secure sample base to the District Director or municipal education coordinator,

who received an orientation on how to disseminate and use the reports in their schools and municipalities. Further, the MIDEH Project supported the participants in training to design strategies for school interventions and tailored assistance based on the evaluation results for their schools.

Development of 2013 Tests. The MIDEH Project, in consultation with the SE/DIGECE director, has prepared a detailed timeline for development of the 2013 tests which shows critical tasks and dates to ensure an assessment with adequate psychometric properties.

One of the first tasks is to replenish the item bank, which was almost depleted by the 2012 census tests. To that end, the MIDEH Project had three training sessions of one day each in the drafting of test items for Mathematics and Spanish with a view to consolidating a national team of item writers. The MIDEH Project had trained item writers extensively in the EQUIP1-MIDEH/AIR project and last year under the current Project. We looked for those veterans to contribute to this year's demand for new items. Some 52 Spanish teachers and 18 math specialists refreshed their item drafting skills in the workshops. They produced 1,063 Spanish items and 1,220 items for Mathematics. The MIDEH Project has established a process whereby teachers can submit items by email for review by MIDEH staff so production can continue all year round. In the next step, pilot tests to validate the new items advanced during the quarter will be designed. Pilot testing of over 2,000 items in 86 formats for grades 1-9 will occur in the next quarter.

Program Result 2: Institutionalizing Educational Quality Inputs

Activity 2.1 Transferring Technical Capacity to National Institutions; and Activity 2.2 Financial and Technical Sustainability

The leadership of the Ministry of Education has been a critical element to draw public attention to the importance of standardized tests as a reliable tool for measuring student academic achievement, and the need for performance data and evaluation information to better define policies and strategies to improve the quality of education.

As reported previously, DIGECE succeeded in coordinating the massive logistics of the census test application for the 2012 end of grade evaluation. This quarter the MIDEH Project assisted DIGECE to ensure access by schools and teachers to their test results via the SE web platform for census test reporting. On its own initiative, and drawing on its 2012 experience, DIGECE is preparing to administer the 2012 standardized tests in all the private schools nationwide in the second week of May, a plan delayed from the earlier announced date of February 9.

The use of technology is an important element in ensuring sustainability of improvements in administrative efficiency and actions to improve the quality of instruction and student learning outcomes. The improvements described in the sector context section of this report are examples of how the SE has leaped forward to increase its control over the public school systems, to modernize its administrative systems and to reduce costs. The MIDEH Project continued to apply advanced technology solutions in the analysis of 2012 test results and the production of reports at the national, school, and classroom level. During the quarter, MIDEH Project technical staff and SE/Info-Technology continued work to find technology solutions to the problem of limited availability of formative tests.

During this quarter AIR and the MIDEH Project agreed on a revised graduate certificate program in Student Academic Evaluation with the National Autonomous University (UNAH). With a more clear focus on student evaluation, the second “Diplomado” will be offered in the next quarter with five modules. The MIDEH Project continued support to the UNAH initiative to create a Master’s program in Psychometrics and Education Evaluation, which gained some forward movement in the process of approval by the council on higher education. The Master’s program is now expected to start in June 2013.

Program Result 3: Strengthening Civil Society Participation in Supporting Education

The MIDEH Project sub-grants component picked up speed this quarter with two awards made, and another sub-grant approved and awarded in the first days of April. In addition, two new organizations have pre-qualified to advance to a full application. By including representatives of civil society in the events to socialize 2012 test results, many civil society and local governments were catalyzed to action in support of educational quality improvements. In those municipalities with lower student performance, leaders especially felt a sense of urgency in the matter of improved instruction and learning and the need for full community involvement.

The first sub-grant awarded in December 2012 to the Riecken Foundation was formally inaugurated in February 2013 in the community of Santa Maria de la Paz, with the participation of the Minister of Education and the Deputy Director of USAID along with local notables. The program operates in 12 municipalities of seven departments and aims to improve student academic achievement in Spanish through promotion of reading for pleasure.

New awards were made to Transformemos Honduras to monitor the number of class-days in a representative sample of schools in all the departments of the country, and to the Association of Municipalities of Olancho to strengthen local capacity to improve educational processes in the department of Olancho with focus on six northern municipalities. The MIDEH Project was particularly pleased to engage with the association of municipalities as a non-traditional partner for these types of activities.

A program proposed by the Honduran NGO Pro-Integration Educativa Roatan (Partners in Education Roatan) was approved for a sub-grant in March. The award was made in early April for the Bay Islands “Voices for Education” for community mobilization in support of education improvements, regional coordination, and teacher training in two of the island municipalities in Roatan and Guanaja.

As reported previously, MIDEH Project staff is active in the group of organizations led by FEREMA which has launched a national communications campaign “Educación es Primero” (Education First). The Project will ensure that local communications activities carried out by recipients of sub-grants will align with the national education media campaign. While the MIDEH Project had only proposed to provide technical inputs to the campaign, the Project may contribute a modest amount of funds to support the “Educación es Primero” campaign next quarter after we evaluate what amount would be appropriate compared to cash contributions received from other supporting organizations.

IV. Opportunities, Constraints, and Corrective Actions

The failure of the Ministry of Education to fully expend the funds allocated by the Common Fund for census and sample tests means that momentum has slowed in the phase of socializing and promoting the use of the test results. The MIDEH Project can fill some of the needs through its training and socialization events at the departmental, district, and school director level, later to be replicated with teachers, but even then the Project will only reach about 7%-8% of the total teaching force. The MIDEH Project has responded to individual district directors' requests for training of their teachers in formative tests and the use of the 2012 evaluation results even though the districts/municipalities may not be included in the Project's list of critical municipalities. We plan to sub-contract the training and socialization of school director leaders and normal school faculty and students in four additional departments to supplement the training done directly by MIDEH Project staff.

If the uncertainty of donor or national funding for 2013 tests is not resolved early in the next quarter, it may be impossible for the SE to carry out census tests. The short timeframe for the 2012 tests was only possible with an emergency decree from the cabinet to allow accelerated procurement procedures for the printing of the tests. MIDEH Project technicians continue to develop the test formats so to be ready even if only for a sample-based evaluation.

The outlook for the establishment of an independent evaluation institute is bleak and thus continues to be a constraint to moving forward with Program Result 2. The MIDEH Project maintains its strategy of focusing on the current operators for capacity building, that is, the SE units of DIGECE and Info-Technology. A baseline assessment of these units and others including INICE and Curriculum will be carried out next quarter and which we expect will provide information to define a more formal agreement with the SE for capacity building.

V. Coordination with Other Actors

Coordination with other education stakeholders during the quarter is described throughout this report. Coordination with the Ministry of Education continued at a high level with the Minister and his senior advisors, as well with unit heads of DIGECE and Info-Technology.

The MIDEH Project assisted its companion project, EducAcción, in the processing and analysis of the evaluation results for schools from its target municipalities which fell into the secure sample testing. As mentioned in Section III, Result 1, the Project lent assistance to GIZ in the analysis of results in the western region of Honduras.

MIDEH Project staff worked in coordination with the other organizations, especially with the expanding group of sub-grant recipients and applicants for sub-grants. The alliance with the UNAH to promote the formation of Honduran professionals through the certificate program and development of a Master's program in Psychometrics and Evaluation continues strongly.

Since the MIDEH Project does not have a direct relationship with the MERECE donor group we rely on the USAID representative to keep us up to date on the discussion of the 2013 POA for EFA and the outlook for funding for the end of grade evaluation this year.

VI. Activities Planned for next Quarter

A. 2012 End of Grade Evaluation Results: Socialization and training in the use of the 2012 test results will continue through the next quarter, but will then be reduced as we get further into the school year and the demands on the Project staff for the development of the 2013 tests increase. Four regional events for school directors are planned in late April and early May. Training of the faculty in four normal schools – Tela, Santa Rosa, Gracias, and Santa Barbara – is scheduled for the same time period. All training for third year normal school students must be completed before June graduation.

Planning for 2013 end of grade testing which began in February with DIGECE will be in full implementation this coming quarter, with important benchmarks to complete in item validation through a pilot application in late May and early June, design of operational test formats, revision of instructions for test administrators and supervisors, and a final decision on the sample design.

B. Capacity-building: The MIDEH project has committed to applying an institutional diagnostic tool to various units of the SE in order to determine a baseline value for measuring progress in building technical, managerial, and financial capacity in the SE to sustain the standards-based educational reforms initiated by the MIDEH Project. The diagnostic tool has been reviewed by AIR's home office but must be discussed with the Minister's advisor before proceeding with the assessment. The assessment was originally included in the Project AWP for March but will be delayed to late May or early June.

Capacity-building in technical areas of psychometrics and evaluation will continue through another offering of the Certificate program to be delivered by AIR experts and UNAH faculty in five weekend modules beginning May 31 and concluding in August.

C. Training: MIDEH Project will continue to socialize the 2012 test results and train district directors, school directors with recognized leadership, and normal school faculties on use of data and education statistics, and the use of formative tests, in a series of workshops at the regional level. Training of normal school faculty on the DCNB materials will extend to the normal schools in the departments of Colon, Cortes, Intibucá and Francisco Morazán through a sub-contract, while MIDEH project staff will cover normal schools in Tela, Gracias, Santa Rosa and Santa Barbara this quarter.

D. Civil Society: Engagement with civil society through the award of additional sub-grants will be a focus for the coming quarter as the 2012 APS comes to a close. MIDEH Project staff and the AIR home office team members are discussing how to better focus the 2013 APS and speed the process of awards. One possibility is to provide tailored assistance to those organizations who pre-qualify to submit a full application through the competitive process of the APS but need assistance to develop the final design of their project. At least two sub-grants are expected to be awarded in the next quarter.

E. Project management and expenditures: Discussions with SE regarding office space for the Project were revived at the end of last quarter and may soon be resolved by the assignment of enough office space in RAP to house the MIDEH Project technical staff members who need to be co-located with DIGECE in the RAP building. All staff positions are filled and no changes are anticipated. The Project has made extensive use of temporary workers and consultants to cover peak demands during the period for producing the evaluation reports and support documents for SE/Common Fund expenditures. Projected expenditures for April through June

are estimated at close to \$300,000 for regular operations and activities, and an additional \$150,000 for disbursements for sub-grants and sub-contracts.

VII. Financial Summary

At the end of March 2013, the estimated project pipeline stood at \$1.9 million. The MIDEH Project has documented \$206,158 in cumulative cost share from partners including municipalities, NGOs, the SE and counterpart funding from the Common Fund for the sample-based 2012 end of grade tests. This total will increase when the final accounting is made on the Common Fund and GOH financing of sample-based tests for 2012, which will occur when our Agreement with the SE ends on June 28, 2013 and when the GOH renders its final report to the donors on the census tests.

Pipeline Summary

Quarter January through March 2013

Pipeline at the beginning of quarter	\$2,413,772
New funds Obligation	\$ 0
Estimated expenses during the reporting period	\$ 500,337
Pipeline at the end of the quarter	\$1,913,435
Estimated expense burn rate for next quarter	\$ 450,000
Estimated quarters of pipeline	3.5*

* The estimate of quarters of pipeline remaining is not a simple linear calculation since expenditures vary over the year with peaks expected in sub-grant disbursements and pilot testing mid-year and extraordinary costs of end of grade tests in the last calendar quarter.

APPENDIX A: QUARTERLY IN-COUNTRY TRAINING JANUARY THROUGH MARCH 2013

1.1 In-Service Teachers

Female	Male	Total	Training Title	Department	Municipality	Date	Number of training hours
22	17	39	Workshop for Math and Spanish teachers in the Esc. Normal Mixta Miguel Ángel Chinchilla	Ocotepeque	Ocotepeque	22-23 Feb 2013	16
27	14	41	Workshop for Math and Spanish teachers in the Esc. Normal Mixta Litoral Atlántico	Atlántida	Tela	8-9 Mar 2013	16
23	16	39	Test items construction for Math and Spanish grades 1-9	Francisco Morazán	Tegucigalpa	09 Mar 2013	8
24	6	30	Test items construction for Spanish grades 1-9	Cortés	San Pedro Sula	16 Mar 2013	8
96	53	149	Total				

1.2 Administrators and Officials:

Socialization 2012 Evaluation Results and Training of Departmental Directors, UTP Coordinators, SE Departmental Business Directors, Municipal Education Coordinators and Civil Society

Female	Male	Total	Department	Municipality	Dates	Hours
33	38	71	Comayagua	Siguetepeque	14-15 March 2013	16
70	48	118	Cortés	San Pedro Sula	18-19 March 2013	16
22	35	57	Lempira	Gracias	21-22 March 2013	16
67	49	116	Francisco Morazán	Tegucigalpa	11-12 March 2013	16
192	170	362	Total			

